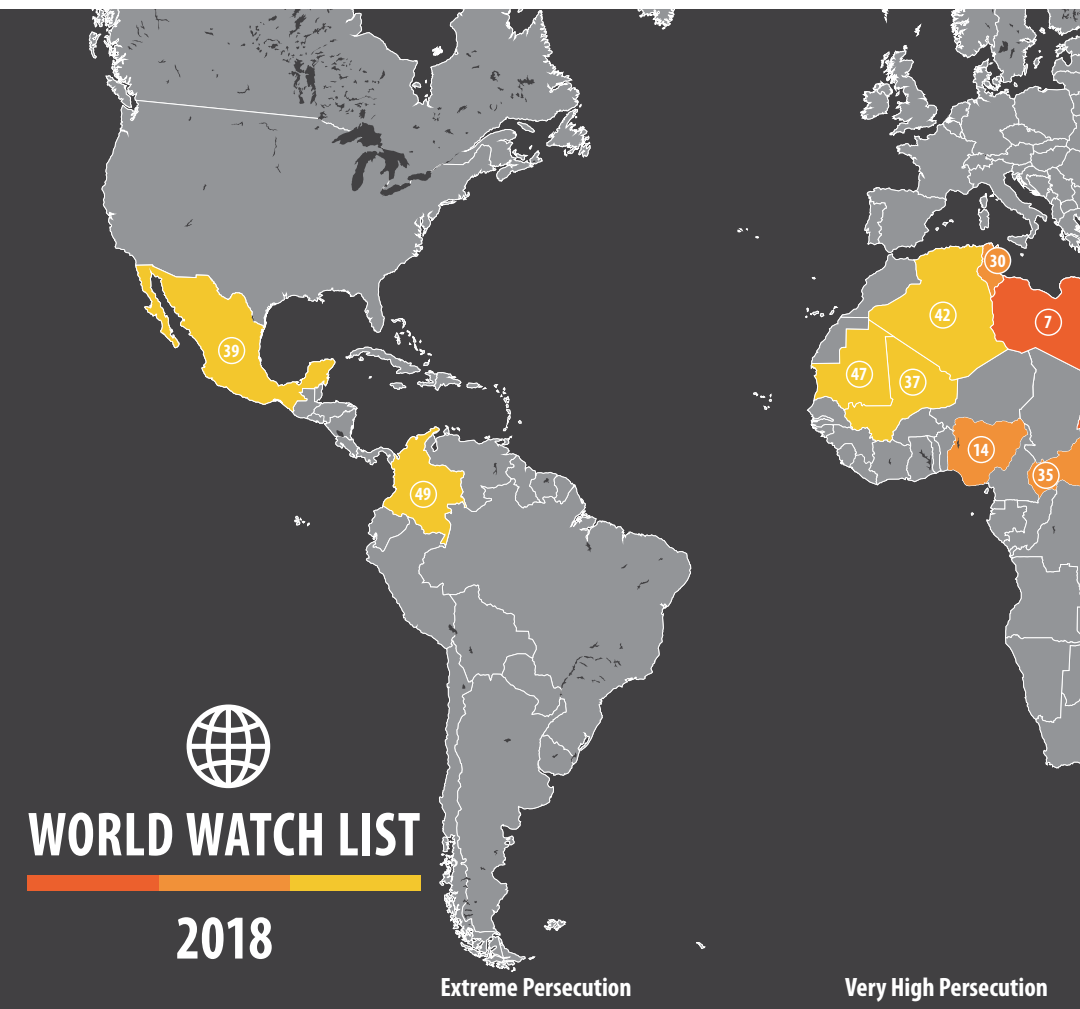


WORLD WATCH LIST 2018

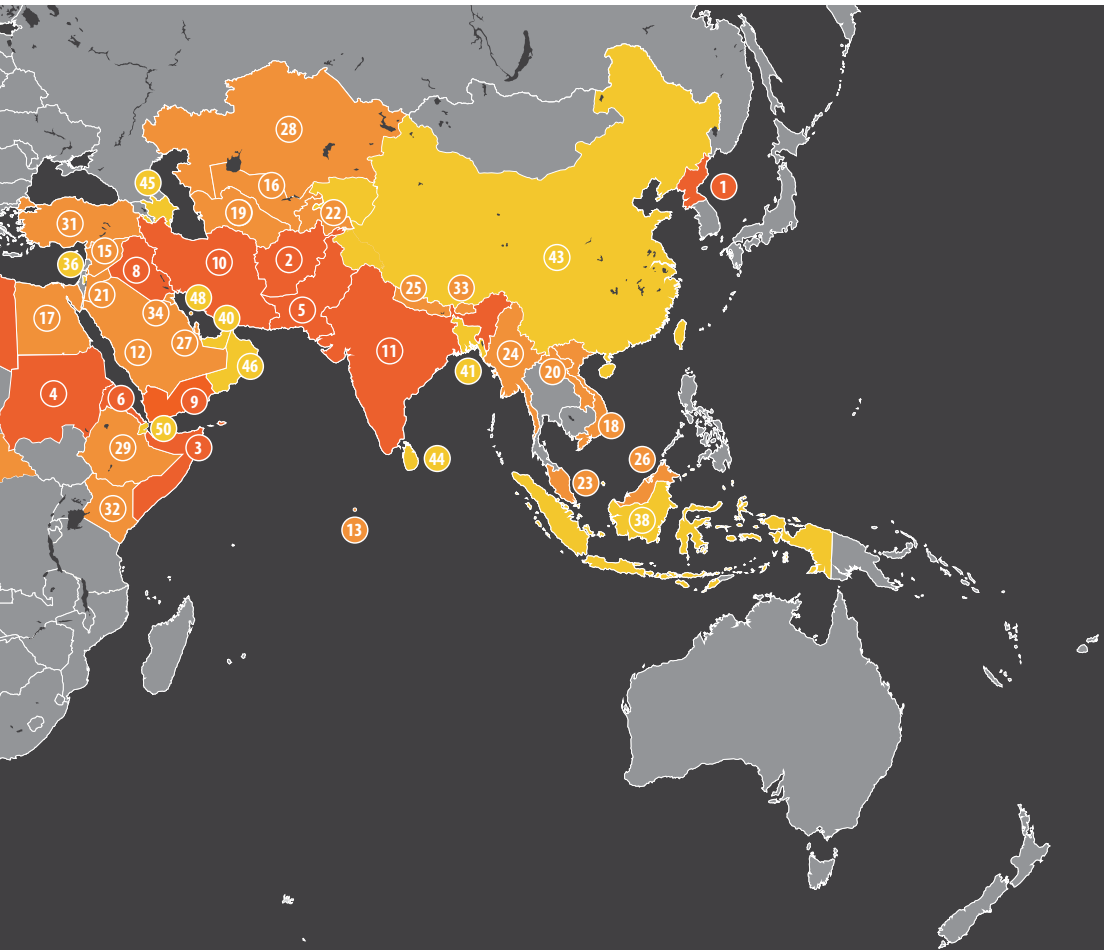
The 50 countries where it's most dangerous to follow Jesus





The 50 countries where it is most dangerous to follow Jesus:

- 1 North Korea
- 2 Afghanistan
- 3 Somalia
- 4 Sudan
- 5 Pakistan
- 6 Eritrea
- 7 Libya
- 8 Iraq
- 9 Yemen
- 10 Iran
- 11 India
- 12 Saudi Arabia
- 13 Maldives
- 14 Nigeria
- 15 Syria
- 16 Uzbekistan
- 17 Egypt
- 18 Vietnam
- 19 Turkmenistan
- 20 Laos



High Persecution

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| 21 Jordan | 31 Turkey | 41 Bangladesh |
| 22 Tajikistan | 32 Kenya | 42 Algeria |
| 23 Malaysia | 33 Bhutan | 43 China |
| 24 Myanmar | 34 Kuwait | 44 Sri Lanka |
| 25 Nepal | 35 Central African Republic | 45 Azerbaijan |
| 26 Brunei | 36 Palestinian Territories | 46 Oman |
| 27 Qatar | 37 Mali | 47 Mauritania |
| 28 Kazakhstan | 38 Indonesia | 48 Bahrain |
| 29 Ethiopia | 39 Mexico | 49 Colombia |
| 30 Tunisia | 40 United Arab Emirates | 50 Djibouti |



The 50 countries where it's most dangerous to follow Jesus

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WORLD WATCH LIST

2018



A Letter from David Curry, CEO

The World Watch List matters. It matters because it is the most trusted measurement of religious persecution in the world today.

But even more important, the list matters because it's a spiritual EKG showing the strength and vulnerability of the global Church—the body of Christ.

It's easy to move through life disconnected from what happens to believers in other parts of the world. But this report helps us close the gap between us.

The World Watch List helps us understand how to pray, to support, to empathize and to stand with persecuted Christians when they suffer—and rejoice with them when conditions improve.

After all, the World Watch List isn't about the numbers, but the people these numbers represent. I hope you see their stories of victory and resilience, and—more than anything—I **hope you see the powerful Kingdom work God is accomplishing in some of the most difficult countries in the world.**

In response, we call the Church to pray for, connect with and support our brothers and sisters who are both living and dying for their faith.

Please pray with us that the World Watch List 2018 would be a catalyst for mobilizing believers to stand in unity with their persecuted family all around the world.

May God richly bless you,

David Curry
President/CEO
Open Doors USA

OUR STORY

Open Doors exists to strengthen the Church to be the Church in the most hostile places.

In over 60 countries, Open Doors supports persecuted Christians with Bibles, emergency aid, discipleship training, vocational skills, trauma counseling, advocacy and a host of other ways so that they know they're not forgotten and can stand strong to serve their communities. So that they can give life.

At Open Doors, we're committed to those who suffer for following Jesus, and we believe the persecuted Church is part of the DNA of every Christian.

Our ministry was launched by a courageous Christian man from the Netherlands named Brother Andrew. Many people best know Brother Andrew from his most well-known book, *God's Smuggler*, which tells stories of his secret missions to smuggle Bibles into hostile regions.

During his life, Brother Andrew took great risks to bring the gospel into communist countries during



Brother Andrew, Open Doors founder

the height of the Cold War. Brother Andrew believed no door is closed to us when we pray—and that same passion is embedded in our ministry:

Today, Open Doors works in more than 60 countries—serving persecuted Christians where faith costs the most.

We're present—on the ground—and understand the full story, not just sound bites or secondhand reports. We pull back the curtain to inspire and invite others to be part of the amazing story God is writing for His Church worldwide.

Because of our frontline access, we are uniquely set up to connect you with your persecuted family.

Persecuted believers—like Hannah in North Korea (p. 6), Rohan and Neha in India (p. 17), and Yakubu in Nigeria (p. 21)—believe God is in control and He will bring good out of their current situation.

And we want them to know they're not alone... that the worldwide Church stands with them.

This is our family. This is our responsibility. This is our mission.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership and support that enables us to strengthen the Church in the most dangerous places.

"Our prayers can go where we cannot.... There are no borders, no prison walls, no doors that are closed to us when we pray."

—BROTHER ANDREW

ABOUT THE WORLD WATCH LIST



RANKING METHODOLOGY:

What is the World Watch List?

The World Watch List is an annual report on the global persecution of Christians ranking the top 50 countries where Christians are persecuted for their faith. Released at the beginning of each year, the list uses data from Open Doors field workers and external experts to quantify and analyze persecution worldwide.

How are the countries ranked?

Countries are ranked by the severity of persecution of Christians, calculated by analyzing the level of violent persecution plus the pressure experienced in five spheres of life. For the detailed methodology, visit [ODUSA.org/WWLMethodology](https://www.odusa.org/WWLMethodology).



Pressure

Degree of pressure in five spheres of Christian life



Church life

+



National life

+



Community life

+



Family life

+



Private life

Max score
per sphere
= 16.7



Violence

Amount of violent incidents against Christians and the Church



Violence Max score = 16.7



MAX
SCORE
= 83.3

+



MAX
SCORE
= 16.7

=

RANK
#

MAX
SCORE
= 100

FACTS & TRENDS

*Photo by Franco Arzola

- + 215 million Christians experience high levels of persecution in the countries on the World Watch List. This represents 1 in 12 Christians worldwide.
- + North Korea is ranked #1 for the 16th consecutive year (since 2002).
- + During the World Watch List 2018 reporting period: 3,066 Christians were killed; 1,252 were abducted; 1,020 were raped or sexually harassed; and 793 churches were attacked.
- + Islamic Oppression fuels persecution in 8 of the top 10 countries.

MAJOR TRENDS IN CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION



1. Spread of Radical Islam

Islamic oppression is one of the most widely recognized sources of persecution for Christians in the world today—and it continues to spread—aiming to bring many parts of the world under Sharia law. The movement, which often results in Islamic militancy and persecution of Christians, is expanding in Asia (Philippines, Bangladesh, Indonesia) and Africa (Egypt, Nigeria, Somalia).



2. The Rise of Religious Nationalism

In an effort to preserve power, insecure governments are using the country's majority religion to marginalize Christians and other religious minorities. This phenomenon has been observed in some parts of Asia with Hindu nationalism (India, Nepal) and Buddhist nationalism (Myanmar, Sri Lanka) both gaining ground.



3. Intense Persecution in Central Asia

Persecution in Central Asia is on the rise in countries like Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan—and Azerbaijan is new to the list at #45. There is a grassroots revival of Islam in Central Asia, and that means more pressure from the nationalist pro-Islamic governments and within society—causing increased persecution levels on two fronts.

WORLD WATCH LIST 2018



As you read through the 2018 World Watch List, you'll see themes and stories that emerge from the research and country context. We pray these important details will help you understand the situations your Christian family faces across the globe—and, most importantly, we hope these critical insights will help fuel your prayers for the worldwide Church.

North Korea

Hannah's Story



“My mother only taught me one prayer. But I still pray it every day, for my family and for my country: ‘*Hanonim, Hanonim!* Lord, Lord, please help!’”

“My mother only taught me one prayer. But I still pray it every day, for my family and for my country: ‘*Hanonim, Hanonim!* Lord, Lord, please help!’”

It is a prayer that has sustained Hannah Cho throughout unimaginable hardship in North Korea. In the nation where Christians experience the widest extent of persecution in the world, Hannah and her husband endured horrific torture for their faith in a labor camp, ultimately leading to his death. Two of her six children died young, and Hannah has spent years separated from her family, wondering if they are alive after fleeing to neighboring countries for safety. Still, despite trials of many kinds, her trust in Jesus’ steadfast love remains.

Hannah is able to share her story with Open Doors because she now lives in relative freedom. But there are many others like her whose stories go untold as they languish in North Korean prison camps, starve for lack of food rations and endure hard labor for their faith in Jesus Christ. Open Doors helps believers in North Korea and also supports North Korean refugees by providing shelter, pastoral care and Bible materials.

Even now, in the worst place on earth for Christians, God is at work, bringing many like Hannah to Himself, perfecting their faith and keeping them under the shadow of His wing.

1

North Korea

Source of Persecution Communist and Post-communist Oppression

Population 25,405,000

Christians 300,000

Main Religion Atheism/Traditional Beliefs

Government Communist Dictator

Leader Kim Jong-Un

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence 63%



Church life 99.8%



National life 99.8%



Pressure



Community life 99.8%



Family life 99.8%



Private life 99.8%



Pressure Against Christians at the Highest Level

The primary driver of persecution in North Korea is the state. For three generations, everything in the country focused on idolizing the leading Kim family. Christians are seen as hostile elements in society that have to be eradicated. Due to the constant indoctrination permeating the whole country, neighbors and even family members are highly watchful and report any suspicious religious activity to the authorities.

Prayer Points

- Pray that the country's rulers will come to know God, for the protection of the North Korean Church, and for healing and restoration to take place in this country.
- The situation for Christians is vulnerable and precarious. They face persecution from state authorities and their non-Christian family, friends and neighbors. Pray for their protection.
- Pray for strength and courage for Christians who suffer in prisons, labor camps and remote areas.

2

Afghanistan

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression

Population 34,000,000

Christians Thousands, Unspecified

Main Religion Islam

Government Presidential Islamic Republic

Leader President Ashraf Ghani

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence 60%



Church life 99.8%



National life 99.9%



Community life 99.8%



Family life 99.8%



Private life 99.8%



Pressure



A Dangerous Faith in Jesus

Because Afghanistan is an Islamic state by constitution, government officials, ethnic group leaders, religious officials and citizens are hostile toward adherents of any other religion.

Because all Christians in Afghanistan are essentially converts, they are unable to express their faith, even in private. Converts can experience loss of personal property and businesses, beatings, and even death at the hands of their own family members and communities.

Prayer Points

- Pray for Christian converts from Islam, who face strong pressure from family, friends and neighbors to recant their Christian faith.
- The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan does not allow conversion from Islam. Please pray for change to take place within the country.
- The increasing level of violence in Afghanistan creates a general sense of insecurity. Please pray for stability and peace in the country.



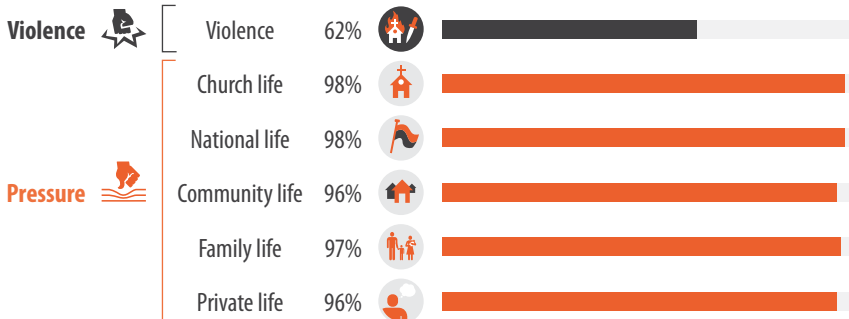
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Somalia

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression
Population 14,320,000
Christians A Few Hundred, Unspecified
Main Religion Islam
Government Federal Parliamentary Republic
Leader President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data



No Room for Christianity

Islam is the state religion and society expects all Somalis to be Muslim. Imams in mosques and madrasas as well as leaders of al-Shabab state publicly that there is no room for Christians in the country.

In Somalia, there are no safe places for Christians to practice their faith. It is a violent country where believers face horrific challenges, but Christians still choose to follow Jesus knowing these dangers.

Prayer Points

- Somali Christians must hide their faith for protection. Pray for their safety and discipleship opportunities for these isolated believers.
- Pray that the Lord will raise up bold believers who share the gospel at great cost.
- Thank the Lord for His promise to build his Church, and pray that He will continue to draw many Muslims to the gospel.

4

Sudan

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression

Population 42,166,000

Christians 1,996,000

Main Religion Islam

Government Presidential Republic

Leader President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence

72%



Church life

96%



National life

94%



Pressure



Community life

85%



Family life

87%



Private life

85%



One Religion, One Culture

Persecution comes from the government and radical Muslims and is systematic and reminiscent of ethnic cleansing. Under the authoritarian rule of President al-Bashir and his party, there is no rule of law in Sudan; press and media laws are restrictive, and freedom of expression has been highly curtailed.

Historically, Islam is deeply embedded in Sudan's society, and the government strictly implements the policy of one religion, one culture and one language.

Prayer Points

- Pray for opportunities for Christians to fellowship with other believers, and ask God to protect them as they follow Jesus in the face of intense persecution.
- Pray for church leaders to stand strong in the midst of pressure from Islamic extremists.
- Ask God to work in the hearts of Sudanese government leaders—convicting them to seek justice and peace through the power of the Holy Spirit.



5

Pakistan

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression

Population 196,744,000

Christians 3,938,000

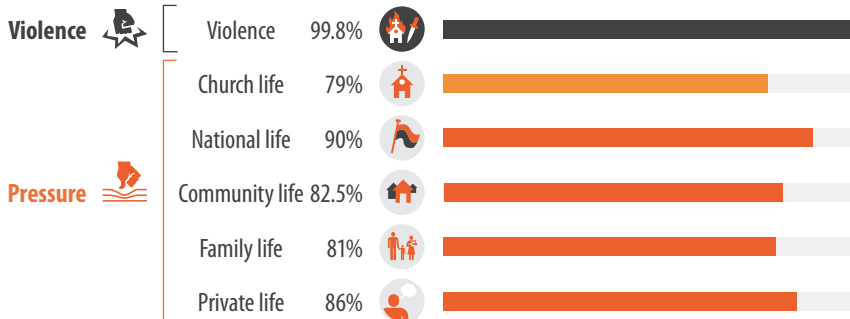
Main Religion Islam

Government Federal Parliamentary Republic

Leader Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data



Persecution in Society and the Home

Much of the Christian persecution in Pakistan comes from radical Islamic groups that flourish under the favor of political parties, the army and the government. These radical Islamic groups run thousands of Islamic education centers where youth are taught and encouraged to persecute religious minorities like Christians.

However, the main sources of danger for Christians often come from their own families, since conversion from Islam is seen as cause for shame.

Prayer Points

- Pray for Pakistani converts from Muslim backgrounds who suffer the brunt of the persecution in Pakistan. Radical Islamist groups see them as apostates, and their family, friends and neighbors see their conversion as shameful to the community.
- Pray for safety and protection for the Christian women and girls in Pakistan who must live under the threat of abduction, rape and forced marriage.



6

Eritrea

Source of Persecution Dictatorial Paranoia

Population 5,482,000

Christians 2,741,000

Main Religion Islam

Government Presidential Republic

Leader President Isaias Afwerki

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence

57%



Church life

91%



National life

97%



Pressure



Community life

94.5%



Family life

87%



Private life

91%



Authoritarianism, Harassment and Vulnerability

Both the government and the cultural climate in Eritrea contribute to the persecution of Christians in this country in the Horn of Africa. President Afwerki's regime is known for absolute authoritarianism. The arrest, harassment and murder of Christians accused of being agents of the West is commonplace.

At the same time, Muslims—who make up roughly half the population—are becoming more radicalized, resulting in increased vulnerability for Christians living in their vicinity.

Prayer Points

- Thousands of Christians have been imprisoned in Eritrea, some of whom still remain in prison after more than 10 years. Pray for endurance for brothers and sisters under these horrific conditions, and ask God to give them perseverance in their faith.
- Pray for God's abundant grace to those who are filling the positions of imprisoned church leaders. Ask the Lord to equip them for the task of leading the church.



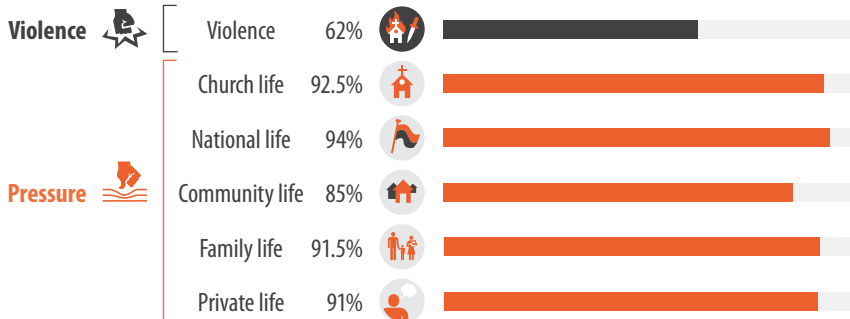
7

Libya

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression
Population 6,409,000
Christians 41,000
Main Religion Islam
Government Transitional
Leader Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data



Anarchy Provides Impunity for Islamic Militants

Christians in this country are a small minority. A state of anarchy and civil war results in impunity for Islamic militants and organized criminal groups engaged in the persecution of Christians.

Libyan believers from Muslim backgrounds face violent and intense persecution, constantly pressured by their families and the community to renounce their faith. Christ-followers who publicly express their faith face the risk of arrest and violence as well.

Prayer Points

- Pray for the growing number of Christians from Muslim backgrounds in Libya, especially those isolated from other believers.
- Pray that many would hear the gospel through Arabic satellite and web broadcasts.
- Pray for the protection of new believers and for opportunities to cultivate and grow in their faith.

8

Iraq

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression

Population 38,654,000

Christians 258,000

Main Religion Islam

Government Federal Parliamentary Republic

Leader Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence

68%



Church life

90%



National life

89%



Pressure



Community life

89%



Family life

88%



Private life

88%



Islamic Extremism in Society and Family Life

In Iraq, numerous groups contribute to the persecution of Christians. Radical movements such as ISIS often target Christians and other religious minorities for kidnappings and killings. Government officials, both national and local, have threatened Christians, “encouraging” them to leave the country. Christians from Muslim backgrounds face serious pressure from their clans, families and communities, who will sometimes go so far as to try to kill them.

Prayer Points

- Many encouraging messages report people coming to Christ in the southern parts of Iraq. Please pray for God to provide good shepherds for His people in this region.
- Thank God for the many Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) who have been able to return to their villages in the Nineveh Plain since forces drove out ISIS.
- Pray for priests and pastors ministering in Iraq, that they might be living examples of Christ’s presence.

9

Yemen

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression
Population 28,120,000
Christians A Few Thousand, Unspecified
Main Religion Islam
Government Transitional
Leader President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence

15.5%



Church life

99.8%



National life

99%

Pressure



Community life

98%



Family life

99%



Private life

99%

A Strict Islamic System

Government officials create and maintain a strict Islamic system that treats all nationals as Muslims. In many areas, the Saudi-led military intervention has created power vacuums, allowing groups like ISIS and Al Qaeda affiliates to expand their operations and even kill Christians. Converts from Islam to Christianity suffer from violence and pressure from their extended family as well as tribal leaders if their new faith is discovered.

Prayer Points

- Pray that God would touch the hearts of ISIS and Al Qaeda extremists with the truth of the gospel.
- The instability in Yemen has created a humanitarian crisis. Ask God to help provide food, clean water and safety to the people of Yemen.
- Pray that the secret believers from Muslim backgrounds will have courage and perseverance in their faith.



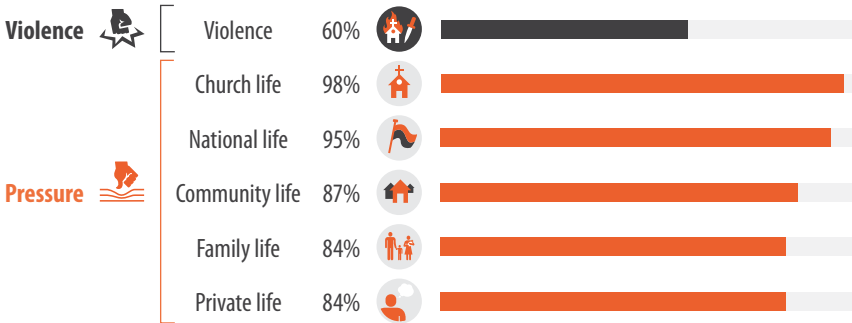
10

Iran

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression
Population 80,946,000
Christians 800,000
Main Religion Islam
Government Theocratic Republic
Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data



Militant Government, Moderate Society

In contrast to the neighboring Arab Gulf countries, the main threat for Christians comes from the government in Iran. The Iranian regime defines Iran as an Islamic State based on Shia Islam. Christians and other minorities are seen as an unwelcome distraction from this plan.

Although some reports mention pressure from families and communities on converts from Islam to Christianity, Iranian society is much less fanatic than their leadership.

Prayer Points

- Any Muslim who leaves Islam faces the death penalty, although authorities haven't acted on this law in recent years. Pray that the laws will change, allowing for freedom of religion.
- For a Muslim family, it is a great disgrace when one of its members leaves Islam. Pray for Christians who have been cursed and disowned by their families for their faith.

Rohan and Neha's Story



“Many people just like us might be facing such persecution. We want to testify to them and serve them in their time of need.”

Late one night, Pastor Rohan and his wife, Neha, heard a knock at the door—but they weren't expecting visitors.

When they looked outside, they saw a crowd of people gathered, sticks in hand. The people accused the couple of evangelizing a young boy in their village. The leaders in the community wanted Rohan and his family out—at any cost.

He remembers the night of terror: “They began to beat my wife and me until we bled ... and then they picked up our baby and threw him against a heap of stones. The trauma was so much that my wife lost the baby she was carrying in her womb.”

Forced to leave their home with nothing, the family had no one to turn to. However, Neha says she heard God reminding her of the pain Christ suffered on the cross. They soon saw His provision. Open Doors partners on the field reached out to the family with medical attention and other practical needs.

Ultimately, persecution and how they were cared for has strengthened Rohan and Neha's resolve to minister to others.

“God miraculously helped us and sent His people to give us timely help,” Neha shares. “Many people just like us might be facing such persecution. We want to testify to them and serve them in their time of need.”

Persecution of Christians is rising in India. More than ever before, the growth of radical Hinduism in the nation is fueling violent attacks, with even greater impunity for attackers as the government sides with radical groups. Yet in the midst of it all, Christianity is growing exponentially in this nation of 1.3 billion. People are coming to Jesus in increasing numbers—proof that nothing can keep Him from accomplishing His purposes through His people.

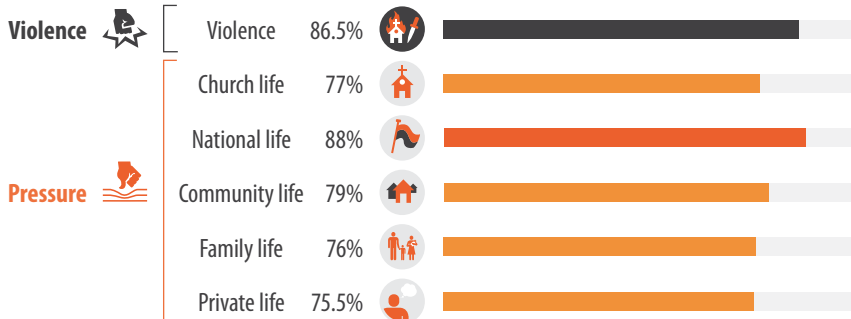


India

Source of Persecution Religious Nationalism
Population 1,342,513,000
Christians 63,970,000
Main Religion Hinduism
Government Federal Parliamentary Republic
Leader Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data



Hindu Radicals Use Violence to “Cleanse” Nation

While the source of persecution for Christians in India depends on their location within the country, most of it comes from Hindu radical groups. Because Hindu radicals view Christians as outsiders, they experience increased persecution. These radicals are intent on cleansing the nation of both Islam and Christianity, employing violence to this end. The government continues to look away when religious minorities are attacked, indicating violence may only increase.

Prayer Points

- Pray for Christian converts from Hinduism who are forcefully pressured to return to their national religion.
- Pray with Christians in India for God’s provision and protection as they boldly evangelize in states with anti-conversion laws.
- Pray for Christian girls placed under house arrest by their families because of their faith. Ask God to encourage them, and pray their families would come to know the Lord.



12

Saudi Arabia

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression

Population 32,743,000

Christians 1,406,000

Main Religion Islam

Government Absolute Monarchy

Leader King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence 24%



Church life 98%



National life 93%



Community life 85%



Family life 82%



Private life 89%

Pressure



Strict Islamic System

Anti-Christian feelings are common among Saudi citizens. Government officials create and maintain a strict Islamic system that treats Christians as second-class citizens and denies places of worship to any other religion than Islam.

The few Saudi Christians from a Muslim background face even more pressure. Nevertheless, the small number of Saudi Christians is increasing and they are also becoming bolder, sharing their Christian faith with others on the internet and Christian satellite TV channels.

Prayer Points

- Pray that Saudis who recently embraced the truth of the gospel would become strong and mature in the Lord.
- Pray that Christian Saudis will find ways to share the truth with their own family members.
- Ask God to strengthen the Church and give leaders wisdom and boldness in the face of intense Islamic oppression.

13

Maldives

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression

Population 376,000

Christians A Few Thousand, Unspecified

Main Religion Islam

Government Presidential Republic

Leader President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence 7%



Church life 99.8%



National life 95%



Pressure



Community life 81%



Family life 93%



Private life 91%



Islamic Oppression Restricts Religious Freedom

The government of the Maldives insists all citizens be Muslims. In effect, *there is no religious freedom*, except for expatriate Christians who are only allowed to practice their faith in utmost privacy, behind closed doors and strictly monitored. Radical Islamic preachers and clerics exert socio-religious control and influence others to do the same, making it impossible for Christians, especially converts, to practice their faith without heavy monitoring or punishment by government authorities.

Prayer Points

- Because the Bible is considered contraband, access to Scripture is restricted. Ask God to provide His Word to secret believers in Maldives.
- Pray that God would reveal Himself to Muslim Maldivians in dreams and visions.
- Pray for the discipleship of secret believers in the country who are stifled by issues of security and unity.

Nigeria

Yakubu's Story



Yakubu thanks the Lord for saving him and knows his life is a testimony to God's faithfulness, both now and forever.

Yakubu awoke to the sound of Boko Haram militants (a group of Nigerian Islamic extremists) breaking down his door in Yobe State, Nigeria. He knew what was coming next. After looting everything, they made their announcement: They were going to kill him. They sliced the back of his neck and cut the front of his neck twice before leaving him on the ground to die.

Miraculously, Yakubu survived, but his injuries and scars continue to plague him. He has a circular slash mark below his right eye. A deep scar runs from the corner of his mouth halfway to his left ear. Several linear scars on his back join in a gnarled mound. It has now been five years since the attack, and these scars still serve as painful reminders of the night he nearly lost his life for his faith.

Through Open Doors, Yakubu has received funds for neck and spinal surgery to alleviate chronic neck pain from the injuries he sustained that night five years ago. Next year, he will undergo plastic surgery as well. His story represents so many others who have suffered violence at the hands of Boko Haram in Nigeria and are receiving assistance from Open Doors as they recover and mourn. Yakubu thanks the Lord for saving him and knows his life is a testimony to God's faithfulness, both now and forever.

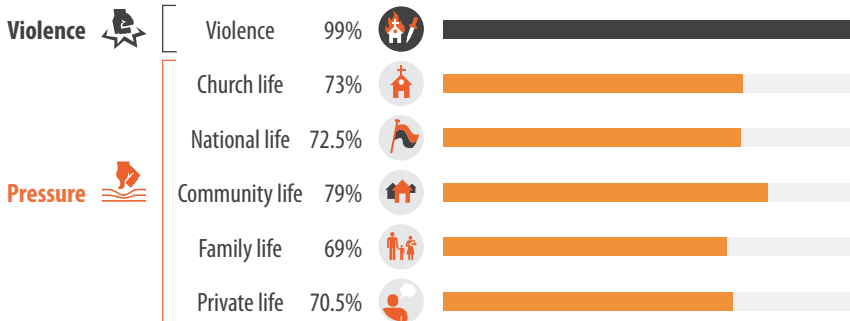


Nigeria

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression
Population 191,836,000
Christians 95,918,000
Main Religion Christianity, Islam
Government Federal Presidential Republic
Leader President Maj. Gen. (ret.) Muhammadu Buhari

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data



A Clash of Regions

Islam is the dominant religion in the north of Nigeria, while Christianity is dominant in the south. Radical groups, such as Boko Haram and Muslim Fulani herdsmen, violently persecute believers in the northern and Middle Belt regions.

In northern Nigeria, Christians are treated as second-class citizens. Christians from Muslim backgrounds face persecution from their own families who reject and pressure them to renounce Christianity.

Prayer Points

- Pray with Nigerian Christians for their protection, particularly for women at risk of being abducted and forced to marry Muslim men.
- Pray for comfort for the thousands of displaced Nigerian Christians and for wisdom for Open Doors partners.
- In northern Nigeria, Christian communities are often left without clean water, clinics and roads. Ask God to provide for physical needs.



Syria

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression

Population 18,907,000

Christians 794,000

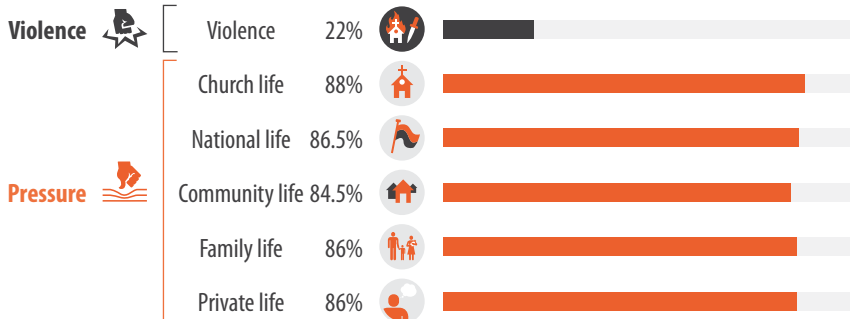
Main Religion Islam

Government Presidential Republic; Highly Authoritarian Regime

Leader President Bashar al-Assad

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data



The Pain of Political Chaos

The extended family is the main source of persecution for converts from Islam. For all types of Christianity, Islamic militant groups are a clear threat.

In areas controlled by radical Islamic groups, most historic churches are either demolished or used as Islamic centers. Public expressions of Christian faith are prohibited, and church buildings or monasteries cannot be repaired or restored—regardless of whether the damage was collateral or intentional.

Prayer Points

- Pray for peace for Syria. The war is complex, and ordinary people are suffering greatly. Pray for a true turnaround.
- Support for basic necessities is still very much needed. Please pray our brothers and sisters will remain encouraged by the help they receive.
- Pray for the Syrian government and for rebel leaders, that they will turn to Jesus and experience the peace of God.

16

Uzbekistan

Source of Persecution Dictatorial Paranoia

Population 30,691,000

Christians 350,000

Main Religion Islam

Government Presidential Republic; Highly Authoritarian

Leader President Shavkat Mirziyoyev

Profile of Persecution

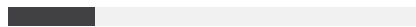
Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence

21%



Church life

96%



National life

78.5%



Community life

78%



Family life

72.5%



Private life

93%



Pressure



Living Under an Authoritarian Regime

The general Islamic culture makes life for converts to Christianity particularly difficult. The police, secret services and *mahalla* local authorities monitor religious activities, and state authorities regularly raid non-registered churches.

All Christian communities experience some form of persecution, but it is the indigenous Christians with a Muslim background who bear the brunt of persecution at the hands of the state and from family, friends and community.

Prayer Points

- Pray for change and for acceptance of Christianity in Uzbekistan.
- Pray for Baptists, Evangelicals and Pentecostals who are threatened, raided, fined and arrested. No religious activities beyond state-run and state-controlled institutions are allowed.
- Pray for believers placed under house arrest by their Muslim families. Pray that Christian women forced to marry would trust in God.



17

Egypt

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression

Population 95,215,000

Christians 9,521,500

Main Religion Islam

Government Presidential Republic

Leader President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence 74%



Church life 57%



National life 70%



Pressure



Community life 73%



Family life 77%



Private life 67.5%



Multi-faceted Persecution

Egyptian Christians suffer from persecution in various ways. Those with Muslim backgrounds face enormous pressure from immediate and extended families to return to Islam. Severe restrictions on building or securing places for communal worship prevent Christians from congregating, in addition to hostility and violence toward believers who do manage to gather. Christians, particularly women, also face discrimination and abuse in their workplaces and the public square.

Prayer Points

- Pray for Christian converts who are ousted from their homes for leaving Islam. Pray the Lord would provide for and comfort them.
- Pray that God would bring even the leaders of Islamist groups to Christ, that they might be used for His purposes.
- Pray for Christians who have been slighted in social, political and legal affairs to entrust their situation to God.



18

Vietnam

Source of Persecution Communist and Post-communist Oppression

Population 95,415,000

Christians 8,368,000

Main Religion Buddhism

Government Communist State

Leader President Trần Đại Quang

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence 44.5%



Church life 82.5%



National life 85%



Pressure



Community life 76%



Family life 50.5%



Private life 74%



Governmental Paranoia, Ethnic Tensions

The government persecutes the Christian minority. Ethnic group leaders exclude Christians and see them as traitors of their cultural identity. Historically Christian communities generally have more freedom—but, if they become politically active, they are targeted by the authorities and can be arrested.

Converts from folk religion and non-traditional Protestants are persecuted more intensely, especially if they are based in the rural areas of central and northern Vietnam.

Prayer Points

- Pray for proper discipleship of the many ethnic minorities coming to faith in rural areas.
- Pray for family members pressuring their relatives to return to traditional faiths and rituals. Pray they would see Christ through their Christian relatives.
- As the Christian minority grows, the government works hard to monitor churches. Pray for a loosening of restrictions and increased freedom.

19

Turkmenistan

Source of Persecution Dictatorial Paranoia

Population 5,503,000

Christians 300,000

Main Religion Islam

Government Presidential Republic; Authoritarian

Leader President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow

Profile of Persecution

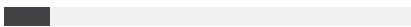
Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence

11%



Church life

91%



National life

77%



Pressure



Community life

77%



Family life

61.5%



Private life

91%



Always Being Watched

Turkmenistan is extremely repressive for religious minorities. The police, secret services and local authorities monitor religious activities, raid non-registered churches and attend church services. The Islamic culture makes life for converts to Christianity particularly difficult.

The printing or importing of Christian materials is restricted. Given increased nationalism and the “spiritual guidance” of the dictatorial president, the pressure on Christians will likely remain at a high level.

Prayer Points

- Turkmenistan is considered one of the most restrictive countries in the world. Pray for increased freedoms in the country.
- Pray for believers from a Muslim background who are fiercely pressured to return to Islam. Pray for protection and endurance.
- Pray for security forces, who are monitoring Christians, to encounter the gospel. Pray their hearts would be softened.



20

Laos

Source of Persecution Communist and Post-communist Oppression

Population 7,038,000

Christians 225,000

Main Religion Buddhism

Government Communist State

Leader President Bounnhang Vorachith

Profile of Persecution

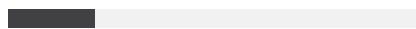
Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence

21%



Church life

89%



National life

83%



Pressure



Community life

81.5%



Family life

51%



Private life

77%



Churches Forced into Secrecy

Communist authorities heavily monitor all religious activities, including those of registered Christian churches. House churches are forced to operate illegally, in secret. Christianity, in particular, is considered a Western influence and especially dangerous.

Provincial and local authorities hinder Christian activity, often cooperating with community leaders like Buddhist monks to put pressure on Christians, especially converts. Families of converts heavily contribute to this persecution within the home.

Prayer Points

- Pray that Christians would have wisdom in witnessing to their Buddhist neighbors and family. Pray their efforts would be well received.
- Pray that Christians in Laos would be able to freely access Bibles and register churches.
- The Communist Party puts enormous pressure on the small Christian minority. Please pray for increased openness and acceptance toward Christianity.

21

Jordan

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression

Population 7,877,000

Christians 169,000

Main Religion Islam

Government Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy

Leader King Abdullah II

Profile of Persecution

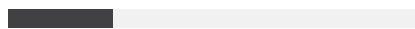
Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence

25.5%



Church life

78%



National life

65%



Pressure



Community life

69%



Family life

80%



Private life

79.5%



Persecution of the Converted

Converts to Christianity from Islam experience a great deal of persecution from all parts of Jordanian society, usually beginning at home. Still seen as Muslims, they are constantly persecuted in hopes they will give up and “return to their senses.”

Christians in Jordan who belong to the Orthodox and Roman Catholic denominations enjoy a relatively high level of religious freedom but still experience discrimination.

Prayer Points

- Pray for Christian converts interrogated by police and abused by family members. Pray the Lord would provide protection and healing.
- Pray that Jordan's refugee crisis would provide opportunities for many to hear and respond to the gospel.
- Pray that Muslims would be overwhelmed by the love of their Christian neighbors and begin to ask questions that draw them toward Christ.



22

Tajikistan

Source of Persecution Dictatorial Paranoia
Population 8,858,000
Christians 300,000
Main Religion Islam
Government Presidential Republic
Leader President Emomali Rahmon

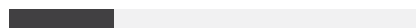
Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence 25.5%



Church life 77%



National life 71%



Pressure



Community life 70.5%



Family life 68%



Private life 80%



An Environment of Restriction

Tajikistan's central government imposes restrictive legislation, and local authorities and police monitor religious meetings, detain believers and confiscate religious materials. The government puts heavy pressure on all "deviating" groups, including Christians.

Another source of persecution comes from the Muslim community that objects to Christians evangelizing among Muslims.

Prayer Points

- Pray for Christians who are under surveillance by authorities and are beaten and pressured to renounce their faith by their families.
- Pray that governmental pressure would lessen and the country would become more open to Christianity.
- Christians are seen as extremists for their practice of religion outside of state-sanctioned structures. Pray that this view of Christians would change.

23

Malaysia

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression

Population 31,164,000

Christians 2,865,000

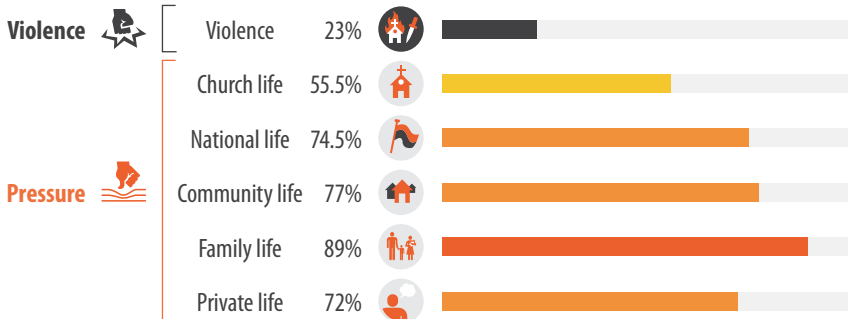
Main Religion Islam

Government Federal Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy

Leader King Muhammad V

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data



Where Conversion Is Illegal

The constitution of Malaysia prohibits conversion for Malays and the propagation of non-Muslim religions. Converts from Islam in Malaysia experience the worst persecution, as *every ethnic Malay is considered Muslim*. Converts are viewed as law-breakers as well as traitors to society, their families and neighbors.

While authorities and Muslim NGOs monitor Roman Catholics and Methodists, the majority of persecution focuses on non-traditional Protestant groups who are active in evangelism.

Prayer Points

- Pray for the protection of secret gatherings of believers from Muslim backgrounds.
- Pray for strength and courage for new converts who are often kicked out of their homes, isolated from their families and communities, and sent to Islamic re-education camps.
- Malays do not have religious liberty to leave Islam. Pray for change in Malaysia.



24

Myanmar

Source of Persecution Religious Nationalism
Population 54,836,000
Christians 4,369,000
Main Religion Buddhism
Government Parliamentary Republic
Leader President Htin Kyaw

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence 46.5%



Church life 66%



National life 62.5%



Pressure



Community life 79%



Family life 66%



Private life 69%



Humanitarian and Religious Crises

In Myanmar, Buddhist leaders instigate the persecution of Christians in predominantly Buddhist communities. In predominantly Christian states, even historical churches experience attacks. More than 100,000 Christians live in IDP (internally displaced) camps, deprived of access to food and health care. In some instances, radical Buddhist monks have invaded church properties and built Buddhist shrines on church premises. The Buddhist, Muslim or tribal families of converts also persecute believers.

Prayer Points

- Pray for persecuted Christian minorities, that they would lovingly minister to persecuted Rohingya Muslims who are facing genocide. Pray that many hearts would be opened to the truth of Christ.
- Christian converts from Islam and Buddhism face strong pressure to recant their faith. Pray these believers would have courage in the face of persecution. Pray for increased religious freedom.



25

Nepal

Source of Persecution Religious Nationalism

Population 28,851,000

Christians 1,172,000

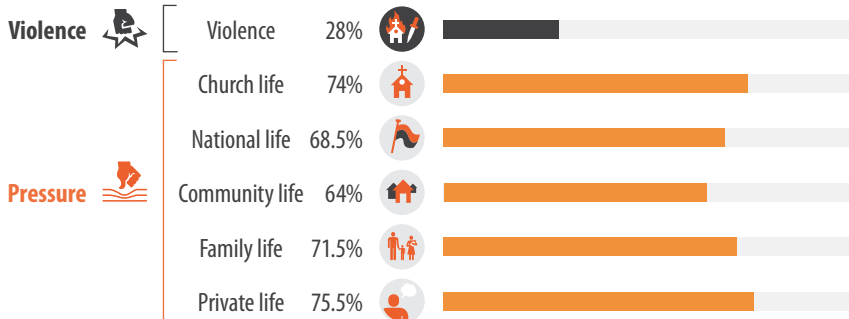
Main Religion Hinduism

Government Federal Parliamentary Republic

Leader President Bidhya Devi Bhandari

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data



Where Religious Converts Are Outlaws

Most of the persecution of Christians in Nepal comes from Hindu radical groups. Churches where foreigners gather experience the least persecution, while converts and Protestant churches are under higher levels of pressure.

The new constitution imposed in 2015 declares that Nepal is a secular state, but clearly specifies conversion to any religion other than Hinduism is not permissible and is in fact a punishable offense.

Prayer Points

- Pray for converts from Hinduism, who experience persecution from their family and community and are at risk under new, restrictive laws.
- Pray for the Nepali government, which has recently passed an even stricter set of laws. Pray that God would move among them and change their hearts toward openness to religious freedom.

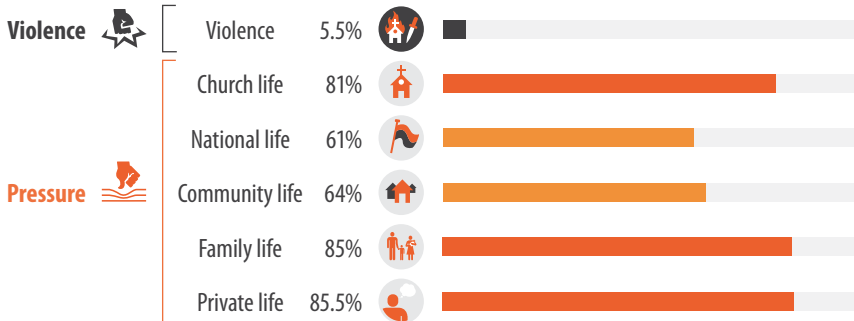


Brunei

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression
Population 434,000
Christians 54,800
Main Religion Islam
Government Sultanate
Leader Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data



Cultural Pressure at Every Turn

Christians in this small Southeast Asian country experience pressure from the government, family and society at large.

Conversion from Islam is illegal, so Christian converts are pressured to return to their former faith. The implementation of Sharia law affects society at large, including Christians who are forced to adhere to Islamic customs and rites. When one family member converts to Christianity, families are forced to split up.

Prayer Points

- Pray for underground believers. Persecution against them is strong because the country is so small—there's nowhere to run if their faith in Christ is exposed. That is why they choose to practice their faith in secret.
- Pray for Malay Muslims who turn to Christ and now face strict punishment under Sharia law.



27

Qatar

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression

Population 2,338,000

Christians 211,000

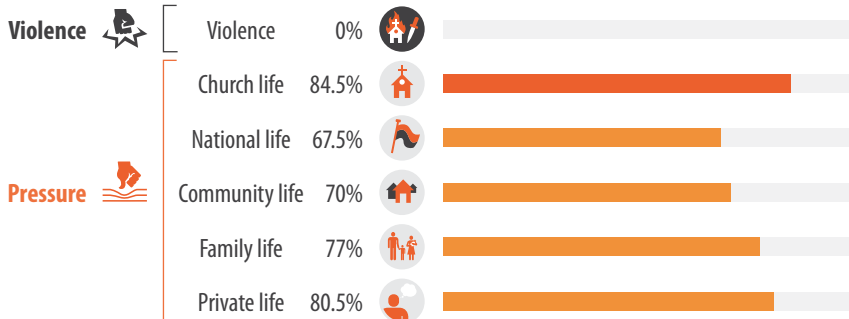
Main Religion Islam

Government Monarchy

Leader Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data



Sharia Law Rules Life and Community

Christians experience persecution at all levels of society: The government, the local community and even one's family can be dangerous for Christians, especially for converts from Islam to Christianity. No other religion than Islam is seen as an acceptable faith, and Sharia law prescribes a wide range of rules for personal, family and community life. Conservative Islamic norms bind Qatar's society.

Prayer Points

- Pray for Christian migrant workers to show the love of Christ to employers who abuse them.
- Pray for Christian converts who feel they cannot share their faith with Muslim family members. Ask God to give them wisdom and discernment as they live out their faith.
- Pray that Qataris would be drawn to Christ in any way that God can use.

28

Kazakhstan

Source of Persecution Dictatorial Paranoia

Population 18,064,000

Christians 4,580,000

Main Religion Islam

Government Presidential Republic

Leader President Nursultan Abishuly Nazarbayev

Profile of Persecution

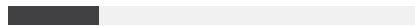
Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence

22%



Church life

82%



National life

73%



Pressure



Community life

61%



Family life

60%



Private life

77%



Christians Face Strict Controls

Since 2010, the Kazakhstan regime has enacted strict media policies and legislative restrictions to keep all religions, including Christianity, under control. Government officials at all levels persecute Christians, from the central government that imposes restrictive legislation to local authorities who raid religious meetings, detain believers and confiscate religious materials. Christians face nearly constant surveillance as well as societal pressure from Muslim relatives and community members.

Prayer Points

- Pray for healing and courage for those in Kazakhstan and Central Asia who are beaten and imprisoned for leaving Islam.
- Pray for the salvation of government authorities who seek to suppress or eradicate Christianity.
- Pray that Christian leaders under surveillance experience the peace and rest only found in and through the love of Jesus.



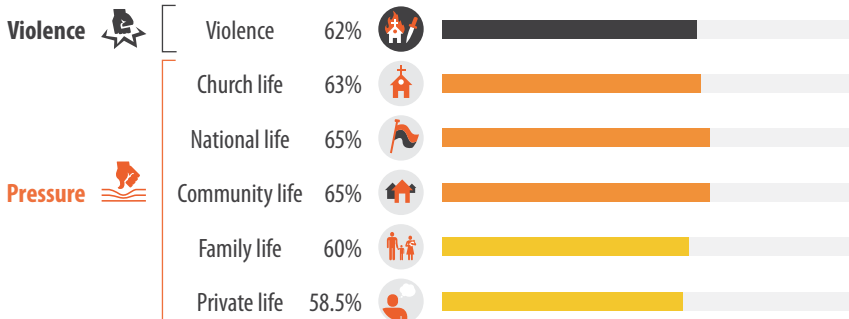
29

Ethiopia

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression
Population 103,345,000
Christians 61,956,000
Main Religion Christianity
Government Federal Parliamentary Republic
Leader President Mulatu Teshome Wirtu

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data



Secularism Bans Religious Activities

In Ethiopia, Christians are subject to persecution from the government, Islam, secularism and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC). The government restricts freedom of religion, while some conservative Muslims pose challenges for believers, especially converts. Secularism bans religious broadcasting and religious activities within schools and diminishes the right to worship, teach and preach. Those who leave the EOC face persecution from family and community members.

Prayer Points

- Pray for greater freedom for the Church in Ethiopia, and for God to reveal His truth to Ethiopian government officials.
- Sadly, many divisions between denominations exist. Pray for unity between believers.
- Christians are often denied resources and discriminated against when looking for work. Pray the Lord would provide for persecuted believers.

30

Tunisia

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression

Population 11,495,000

Christians 23,800

Main Religion Islam

Government Parliamentary Republic

Leader President Beji Caid Essebsi

Profile of Persecution

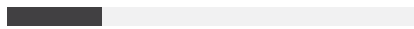
Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence

23%



Church life

72%



National life

64%



Pressure



Community life

63%



Family life

79%



Private life

71%



Growing Influence of Salafist Teachings

Persecution in Tunisia is mainly caused by hostility toward Christians in Islamic society. Even though tolerance has increased since the Arab Spring uprisings of 2011, the influence of Salafist teachings continues to grow. Foreigners enjoy more freedom, but are not permitted to evangelize. And Tunisian converts face persecution from family and community members as well as difficulty in getting authorities to officially recognize their conversion to Christianity.

Prayer Points

- Pray for persecuted Christian youth, especially those who face pressure from non-believing family members when they want to marry.
- Pray persecuted people will feel God's presence. Many lose hope and don't know how to move forward with their lives.
- Pray the Lord will hinder the plans of Islamic extremists and draw them to Jesus.



31

Turkey

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression
Population 80,418,000
Christians 187,000
Main Religion Islam
Government Parliamentary Republic
Leader President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence

52%



Church life

58%



National life

70%



Pressure



Community life

58.5%



Family life

58%



Private life

75%



Transforming Turkey into a Muslim Nation

Religious nationalism has grown to new heights. President Erdogan has strengthened his position, trying to transform Turkey from a secular state into a Sunni Muslim one. Leaving Islam for Christianity is considered a betrayal of the Turkish identity, Islam and the family.

Christians have no access to state jobs and experience discrimination in private employment, especially where employers have ties to the government.

Prayer Points

- Pray for God to enable those experiencing persecution to place all hope and trust in Him.
- Pray for Christians from a Muslim background to minister graciously and wisely to their families. They often experience heavy pressure from family, friends and their community to return to Islam.
- Pray for those who are labeled and treated as traitors after embracing the Christian faith.



32

Kenya

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression
Population 48,467,000
Christians 39,409,000
Main Religion Christianity
Government Presidential Republic
Leader President Uhuru Kenyatta

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence

Violence 56.5%  

Church life 70%  

National life 47%  

Pressure

Community life 60%  

Family life 65%  

Private life 72%  

Militant Attacks Target Christians

Most of the persecution of Kenya's Christians comes from the Islamic militant group al-Shabab. The group, based in neighboring Somalia, has conducted numerous attacks targeting Christians in Kenya, a majority-Christian country. Within Kenya itself, some of the country's tribal leaders oppose Christianity, viewing it as a threat. The Kenyan government restricts churches at times, and rampant corruption in the country allows persecution incidents to remain unpunished.

Prayer Points

- Pray for courage and healing for Christians in regions that have been traumatized by violent attacks and antagonism.
- Pray those within the ranks of Islamic militant groups will repent of violence and come to know Jesus.
- Pray for wisdom for Christians in the political arena. Pray God would protect them and amplify their voices.

33

Bhutan

Source of Persecution Religious Nationalism

Population 793,000

Christians 20,000

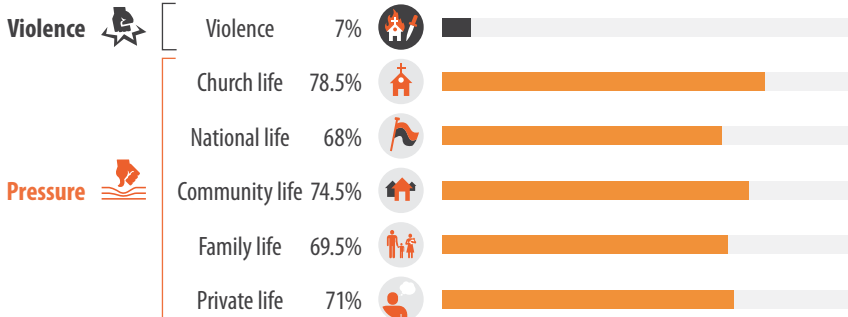
Main Religion Buddhism

Government Constitutional Monarchy

Leader King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data



Buddhists Work to Eliminate Threats

Christians in Bhutan are viewed and treated as traitors to the country's particular brand of nationalism. The government is intent on maintaining a strong national identity and unity by suppressing "foreign" elements, including Christianity. According to the government, the definition of Bhutanese identity is Buddhism, and it works to eliminate groups perceived as threats. Ethnic religious beliefs have merged with the Buddhist identity, further ostracizing Christians, especially in the central and eastern parts of the country.

Prayer Points

- Pray God will protect and strengthen believers who violate anti-conversion law by leaving the Buddhist faith.
- Buddhism is enshrined in Bhutan's constitution. Pray the Holy Spirit would loosen the hold of Buddhism on the country.
- Pray with Christian converts who face strong pressure from family, friends and neighbors to recant their faith.

34

Kuwait

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression

Population 48,467,000

Christians 39,409,000

Main Religion Islam

Government Constitutional Monarchy

Leader Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah

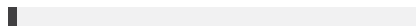
Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence 2%



Church life 73.5%



National life 65%



Pressure



Community life 69.5%



Family life 75%



Private life 80.5%



Muslim Converts Endure Persecution

While Christians experience faith-related restrictions in Kuwait, expatriate Christians are relatively free to worship informally. However, they have a difficult time securing places for worship and are often pitted against each other to gain access to church buildings. Meanwhile, converts from Islam experience discrimination, harassment, police surveillance and intimidation by vigilante groups as well as legal problems related to personal status and property.

Prayer Points

- According to the constitution, Islam is the state religion. Pray Kuwait would move toward true freedom of religion.
- Pray for Muslim family members of Christians to see the love of Christ exemplified.
- In society, Christians are seen as second-class infidels. Pray the Christian community would not be discouraged.



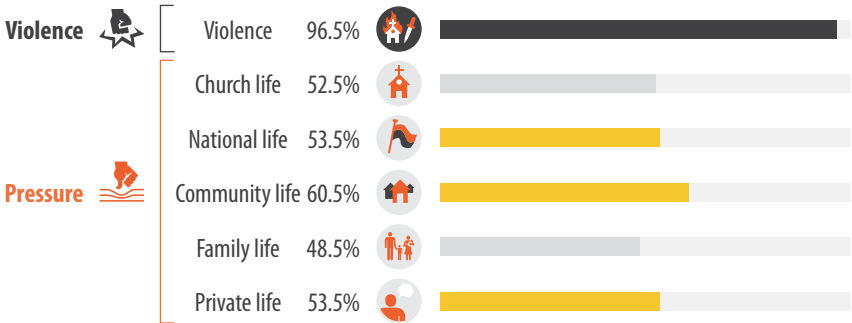
Central African Republic

(CAR)

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression
Population 5,099,000
Christians 3,772,000
Main Religion Christianity
Government Presidential Republic
Leader President Faustin-Archange Touadéra

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data



Christians Face Attacks From the Séléka

While the Central African Republic boasts a Christian majority, there is a significant Muslim minority, particularly in the northeast. The militant Séléka group has mobilized formerly marginalized Muslims to fight against the anti-Balaka militant group comprised of animists and nominal Christians. This conflict has been a source of persecution for Christians who face attacks mainly from the Séléka, but also from the anti-Balaka.

Prayer Points

- Pray with Christians targeted by Fulani herdsmen and Muslim terrorists. Pray persecutors' eyes will be opened to Jesus.
- Pray for persecuted believers to know God's peace and provision in the midst of earthly chaos and loss of possessions.
- Pray for the wisdom of pastors as they minister to their congregations in the face of great difficulties.

36

Palestinian Territories

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression

Population 4,928,000

Christians 67,700

Main Religion Islam

Government Interim Administration

Leader President Mahmoud Abbas

Profile of Persecution

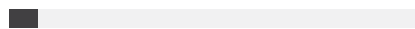
Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence

7%



Church life

75.5%



National life

63%



Community life

64%



Family life

77%



Private life

72.5%



Pressure



Caught in the Middle

Palestinian Christians are caught in the middle of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Their faith makes them minorities within the Muslim-majority Palestinian community, and their Arab ethnicity results in numerous restrictions on the Israeli side. In the West Bank, laws generally protect religious freedom while Gaza is more restrictive. In general, Palestinian society considers conversion from Islam to Christianity to be unacceptable.

Prayer Points

- Pressure has escalated in the territories due to increasing political instability. Pray for peace and stability to enter the region.
- Pray with Christians in this region for courage to live out their faith and foster Christ's peace in the country.
- Pray that Christians would be salt and light in their communities, especially by loving their Muslim neighbors.

37

Mali

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression

Population 18,690,000

Christians 413,000

Main Religion Islam

Government Semi-presidential Republic

Leader President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence

58%



Church life

55%



National life

48%



Pressure



Community life

67%



Family life

57.5%



Private life

68%



Increasing Intolerance

While Malians traditionally practice a relatively tolerant version of Islam, the West African country has become increasingly militant in recent years. In the northern part of the country especially, this intolerance has resulted in intense persecution of Christians. In 2012, militant Islamic groups took over a significant portion of the northern region. Though some have been expelled, these groups seek to radicalize the Muslim population.

Prayer Points

- Driven by terrorist attacks, violence in Mali has increased substantially. Pray for peace over this country.
- Pray for Christians who have been displaced from their homes in northern Mali by Islamic militants.
- Pray for Muslim Background Believers who find it difficult to practice their faith due to hostile family and community environments.

38

Indonesia

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression
Population 263,510,000
Christians 31,925,000
Main Religion Islam
Government Presidential Republic
Leader Joko Widodo

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence 41%



Church life 55.5%



National life 60%



Pressure



Community life 68.5%



Family life 66%



Private life 62%



Radical Islam Exerts Great Influence

Political, cultural and religious forces all contribute to the persecution of Christians in Indonesia. Conservative Muslim political parties and radical Islamic groups exert great influence, resulting in Sharia-inspired policies and public opinion that opposes Christianity. These groups can mobilize hundreds of thousands of people. While the government tightens the country's blasphemy laws, most problems for believers occur in local confrontations with radical Islamic groups.

Prayer Points

- Pray for Christian children in public schools within strong Islamic regions who often experience discrimination.
- Pray for Christian converts from Islam who are pressured to renounce Jesus. They often need Bibles and places to worship.
- Pray God would work to bring Indonesia—home to the largest percentage of Muslims in the world—to follow Christ.

39

Mexico

Source of Persecution Organized Crime and Corruption

Population 130,223,000

Christians 124,869,000

Main Religion Christianity

Government Federal Presidential Republic

Leader President Enrique Peña Nieto

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence

62%



Church life

58%



National life

64%



Pressure



Community life

72.5%



Family life

45.5%



Private life

50%



Crime, Violence and Secularism

The strong presence of corruption at all levels of the Mexican government has resulted in various forms of persecution in the country due to a lack of protections for Christians. Criminal groups attack priests and pastors, while indigenous leaders attack converts to Christianity.

In recent years, the secular ideology has become more prominent in the country, and associated groups are intent on eliminating religious expression in the public domain altogether.

Prayer Points

- Pray for the hearts of those involved in drug cartels. They often kidnap, terrorize and even kill Christians who stand in the way of their illegal work.
- Pray for Christians who are denied access to basic social services and resources because of their faith.
- Mexico is one of the most violent countries in the world. Pray for peace and physical protection for persecuted believers.



United Arab Emirates

(UAE)

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression

Population 9,398,000

Christians 1,206,000

Main Religion Islam

Government Federation of Monarchies

Leader President Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan

Profile of Persecution

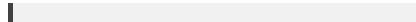
Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence

1%



Church life

71%



National life

62.5%



Pressure



Community life

60%



Family life

73%



Private life

82%



A Contrast of Tolerance

There is a sharp contrast between how different categories of Christians in the United Arab Emirates are treated. Emirati society is fairly tolerant toward the Christian expatriate communities. On the contrary, converts from Islam to Christianity face a lot of pressure. They are mostly persecuted by their families and the surrounding society, making it unnecessary for the government to act against them.

Prayer Points

- Pray that the government will keep the country safe from insurgent/terrorist groups and provide policies that encourage young people to be motivated to work hard for the good of their country.
- Pray for Muslim Background Believers who are afraid to reveal their faith in Jesus—and Christian women who convert from Islam and lose their rights to possessions and their children.

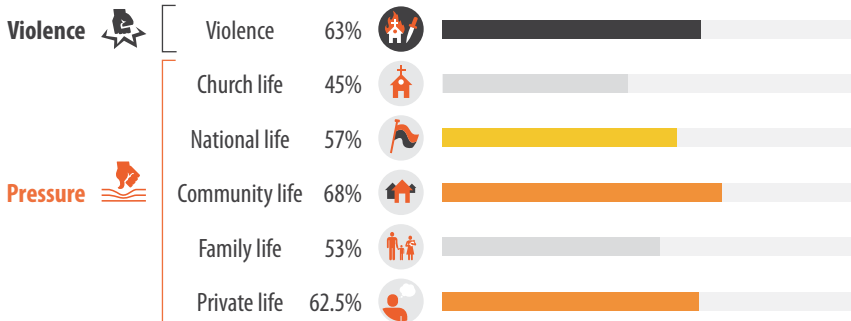
41

Bangladesh

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression
Population 164,828,000
Christians 866,000
Main Religion Islam
Government Parliamentary Republic
Leader President Abdul Hamid

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data



Increased Religious Restrictions

In Bangladesh, Christian converts from Islam face increasing restrictions and persecution. Radical Islamic groups, local religious leaders and families all play a role in this persecution. *Fatwas* (specific interpretations of Islamic law) dictate daily life all over the country.

Christian converts from Muslim, Hindu, or ethnic and tribal backgrounds suffer the most severe persecution for their faith in Bangladesh. To protect themselves against attack, they often gather in house churches or secret small groups.

Prayer Points

- Pray that God would strengthen the faith of Christians in the country.
- Pray with Christians who have left their communities out of pressure to renounce their faith.
- Pray with tribal Christians who are at risk of persecution from two sides. Pray for their safety and courage to stand boldly for the Gospel in their communities.

42

Algeria

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression

Population 41,064,000

Christians 68,500

Main Religion Islam

Government Presidential Republic

Leader President Abdelaziz Bouteflika

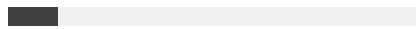
Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence 12%



Church life 74.5%



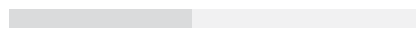
National life 62%



Pressure



Community life 44.5%



Family life 78%



Private life 73.5%



Family Pressure and Blasphemy Laws

The pressure Algerian Christians experience in all areas of life makes it difficult for them to openly practice their faith. Intolerance from Muslim relatives and neighbors is a major source of persecution.

Laws regulating non-Muslim worship, banning conversion and prohibiting blasphemy make proselytizing and public expression of the Christian faith dangerous as well. Even casual conversations between friends and family members regarding faith can be grounds for blasphemy charges.

Prayer Points

- The political future remains uncertain in Algeria. Pray for a smooth transition without violence.
- Pray specifically that new believers who enter the Church will stand strong in their faith.
- Pray for Christians who are persecuted by their families, which is often the case for believers from Muslim backgrounds. Pray for their protection as well as love and forgiveness toward their persecutors.



43

China

Source of Persecution Communist and Post-communist Oppression

Population 1,388,233,000

Christians 97,200,000

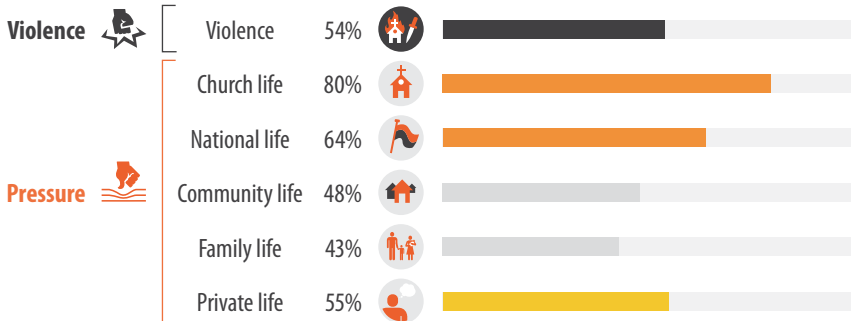
Main Religion Atheism/Other

Government Communist State

Leader President Xi Jinping

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data



Communist and Religious Pushback

The majority of persecution in China is experienced by the small group of Christians from Muslim or Tibetan Buddhist backgrounds. When converts are discovered by their families or communities, they are usually threatened, harmed and reported to authorities.

Another persecution driver is the Communist government. Christians, in particular, are hedged in by authorities, as they are the largest social force in China not controlled by the state.

Prayer Points

- Pray for the growth of believers from minority people groups that are from Muslim and Buddhist backgrounds.
- Pray for Chinese Christians to stand strong amidst tightening religious restrictions and to engage in cross-cultural missions effectively. Pray that teenage and young believers will enter a deeper walk with Jesus in the midst of their materialistic environments.



44

Sri Lanka

Source of Persecution Religious Nationalism
Population 20,905,000
Christians 1,925,000
Main Religion Buddhism
Government Presidential Republic
Leader President Maithripala Sirisena

Profile of Persecution

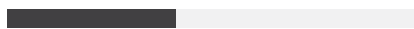
Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence

41%



Church life

60.5%



National life

67.5%



Pressure



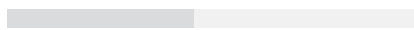
Community life

63%



Family life

45.5%



Private life

67%



Radical Buddhism Opposes Converts

The main drivers of persecution are radical Buddhist movements, at times supported by local officials. Converts from a Buddhist or Hindu background suffer the strongest forms of persecution. They are subject to harassment, discrimination and marginalization by family and community. They are put under pressure to recant Christianity, as such conversion is regarded as betrayal. The Christian minority is partly tolerated, but converts to Christianity are not.

Prayer Points

- Pray for the pastors in Sri Lanka who are mocked and frequently disturbed by their neighbors for conducting services.
- Pray for legal protection to be with pastors in Sri Lanka, that they will not be abused and bullied by the government.
- Please intercede for Sri Lanka, that acceptance for minorities in this country will prevail.

45

Azerbaijan

Source of Persecution Dictatorial Paranoia

Population 9,974,000

Christians 319,000

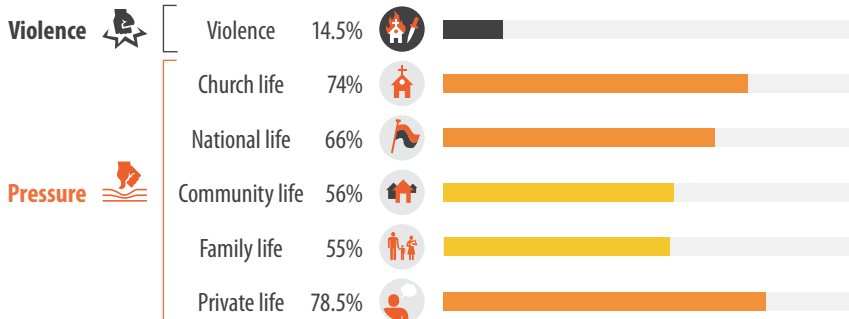
Main Religion Islam

Government Presidential Republic

Leader Ilham Aliyev

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data



Constant Monitoring and Pressure

The state monitors all religious activity and especially targets unregistered groups. While registered churches can meet inside their buildings, permission is needed for organizing events outside these buildings. All Christian materials must be cleared by the Committee for Religious Affairs. It is a punishable offense to bring religious literature into the country. Most churches are infiltrated and informers are everywhere. As a result, Christians do not know whom to trust.

Prayer Points

- Pray that Christians will be able to freely worship and those who meet secretly will remain strong and courageous.
- Pray that as monitors observe Christians, they will hear the truth of the gospel and turn their hearts to Jesus.
- Pray for church leaders as they try to avoid arrest and fines for preaching the gospel.

46

Oman

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression

Population 4,741,000

Christians 204,000

Main Religion Islam

Government Absolute Monarchy

Leader Sultan Qaboos bin Said al Said

Profile of Persecution

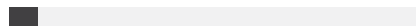
Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence

7%



Church life

75%



National life

56.5%



Pressure



Community life

59%



Family life

73%



Private life

72.5%



Tolerant, Yet Pressure Filled

Oman is dominated by Ibadism, an Islamic sect known for its relative tolerance. Because of this, Christians and even converts from Islam are not subjected to violence. However, leaving Islam is seen as a betrayal of both tribe and family.

Christians who come into contact with Muslims can be accused of proselytism. Persecution through home eviction, job termination, discrimination, harassment and bullying pressures converts to recant their faith.

Prayer Points

- Only a handful of believers live in Oman. Pray that God will pour out His Spirit on the nation.
- Thank the Lord for faithful tentmakers that persevere in serving the Lord in Oman under difficult circumstances. Pray that they will be encouraged.
- Thank the Lord for Omani believers who have recognized Jesus as the Son of God and their king.

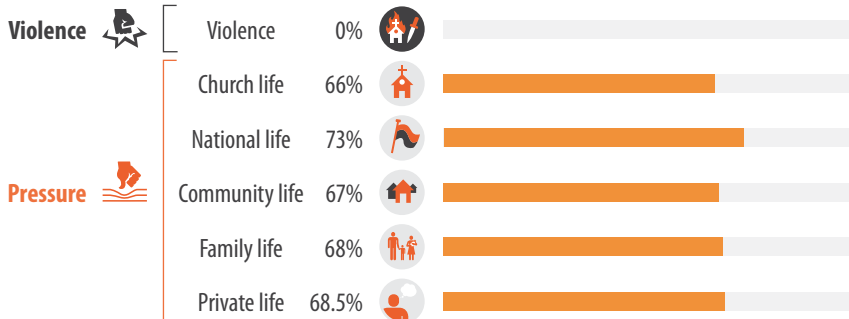


Mauritania

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression
Population 4,266,000
Christians 10,000
Main Religion Islam
Government Presidential Republic
Leader President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data



The State Is a Major Source of Persecution

The “Islamic Republic of Mauritania,” the autocratic government of Africa’s 11th largest country, often acts as protector of the Islamic religion. As a result, the state is a major source of persecution. Radical Islamic preachers and militants contribute to the radicalization of society, fueling antagonism and hatred toward non-Muslims. In addition, a caste system marginalizes darker-skinned Mauritaniens and those who do not adhere to Islam.

Prayer Points

- Pray for illiterate believers of Mauritania as they seek God with limited access to Scripture.
- Pray for new business initiatives in Mauritania intended to help believers financially while also disciplining them.
- Pray for forgiveness and change in unjust social structures and attitudes in this racially divided time in Mauritania’s history.



48


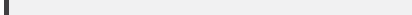
Bahrain

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression
Population 1,419,000
Christians 188,000
Main Religion Islam
Government Constitutional Monarchy
Leader King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence

Violence 1%  | 

Church life 62%  

National life 59%  

Pressure

Community life 61%  

Family life 79%  

Private life 77%  

Rules Consolidate Power Through Repressive Means

Despite being a majority Islamic country, Bahrain is relatively religiously tolerant due to the country's international prominence in banking and trade. However, the rulers are still known for consolidating power through repressive means. Persecution results from prohibitions against Christians proselytizing Muslims, restriction of religious expression and inhibited freedom of assembly. Leaving Islam is considered a betrayal of tribe and family members.

Prayer Points

- Pray for believers from Muslim backgrounds, particularly those who have been shunned by their families and communities upon conversion.
- The constitution allegedly provides religious freedom, yet the law bans religious practices that "violate customs." Pray for true religious freedom.
- Pray that Bahraini Christians would have the courage, wisdom and boldness to reach out to their Muslim neighbors.

49

Colombia

Source of Persecution Organized Crime and Corruption

Population 49,068,000

Christians 46,657,000

Main Religion Christianity

Government Presidential Republic

Leader President Juan Manuel Santos

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence

71%



Church life

51%



National life

51.5%



Pressure



Community life

71.5%



Family life

45.5%



Private life

47.5%



Christians Live Under Suspicion

The main agents of Colombia's persecution are leaders of criminal groups like drug cartels and dissident guerrillas. Indigenous leaders also persecute Christians under suspicion of trying to impose their worldview for territorial advantage. The spread of a secularist ideology in the country has led to increased pressure to eliminate Christian involvement in social and political discourse.

Prayer Points

- Pray for Christians who are vulnerable to hostility due to criminal and revolutionary groups controlling large areas.
- Pray for peace and hope for Christians who live in a constant state of threat.
- Pray for supernatural comfort for believers whose family members have been murdered for their faith.

50

Djibouti

Source of Persecution Islamic Oppression

Population 911,000

Christians 311,100

Main Religion Islam

Government Semi-presidential Republic

Leader President Ismail Omar Guelleh

Profile of Persecution

Based on World Watch List 2018 Data

Violence



Violence

0%



Church life

70%



National life

59%



Pressure



Community life

62%



Family life

73%



Private life

73%



All Laws Are Influenced by Islamic Law

Persecutors in Djibouti include government officials, family members, community leaders and some Muslim religious leaders. The government seeks to control society by stifling the basic freedoms of association, religion and expression. The constitution declares Islam to be the state religion, with all laws and policies influenced by Sharia law. In addition, Jihadists and radical Islamic ideas bleed over from volatile surrounding countries.

Prayer Points

- Pray with Christians who are constricted by Djibouti's communal, Islamic culture. Pray for greater freedom to practice their faith.
- Pray for imams who incite hatred against Christians. Ask God to intervene and soften their hearts toward Jesus.
- Pray Christians will be able to forgive and share the hope of Christ with their persecutors when they face discrimination.



CONNECT WITH YOUR PERSECUTED FAMILY

Join us and take action

After reading through the World Watch List, and learning about the 50 countries where faith costs the most—you might be asking, “What can I do to help?”

Open Doors invites you to:

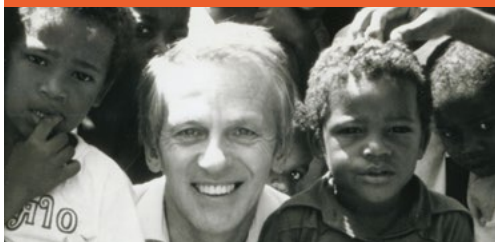
Pray // Sign up for our Prayer Force Alert calendar and commit to praying daily with your persecuted family. Visit OpenDoorsUSA.org/pray to sign up today!

Engage // Write a letter to a persecuted Christian and remind them they're not alone and that believers around the world are praying for them! Visit OpenDoorsUSA.org/letters and send a letter of hope today.

Volunteer // Join us in serving the persecuted Church by using your unique skills and calling by becoming a volunteer. Visit OpenDoorsUSA.org/volunteer to find out more!

Give // Give today and help provide Bibles, discipleship, food, medical supplies, trauma care, safe houses and much more for your persecuted family. Visit OpenDoorsUSA.org/give to give today.

We want to help you deeply connect with your persecuted family around the globe. As Open Doors Founder Brother Andrew reminds us: “We have brothers and sisters in other places. We have friends we never knew.”





"Anyone who is reachable is also winnable for Christ."

—BROTHER ANDREW

STAND WITH THE PERSECUTED



Open*Doors*



For over 60 years, Open Doors has worked in the world's most oppressive countries, empowering Christians who are persecuted for their beliefs.